

How to Leave Your Excuses Behind and Press Into Your Miracle

I'm here to speak to those who are ready to leave your excuses behind. Excuses cause a chain reaction of always missing out on our miracle and our blessing and lead to situations that leave an imprint of regret. My question to you today is, "What is keeping you from your miracle?"

Are you waiting for tomorrow? Have you allowed excuses to steal from you what God has for you today? Tomorrow is the elusive hope that maybe what you've longed for, dreamed of and prayed for might actually come to pass. Making excuses and waiting for tomorrow is a way of putting off the God-encounter that might require you to change.

I spent the entire first half of my life with "tomorrow" as my nemesis, making excuses for why I wasn't doing all that I was called to do. But look at how Jesus confronted excuses. Look at John 5:1-6 (MSG):

Soon another Feast came around and Jesus was back in Jerusalem. Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there was a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda, with five alcoves. Hundreds of sick people—blind, crippled, paralyzed—were in these alcoves. One man had been an invalid there for 38 years. When Jesus saw him stretched out by the pool and knew how long he had been there, he said, "Do you want to get well?"

Can I tell you today, I believe so many of us are standing at the crossroads of pity and power. I hear Jesus declaring to us, "Do you want to get well?" Can you imagine being so thirsty when you are only steps from the well of life, but being willing to die in a pit called excuses? I am calling you

to action! I must warn you: If you miss your moment today, your grandchildren will someday miss the opportunity to brag about the freedom you delivered to your family.

I can hear the sound of marching. It is the sound of those who have waited on the sidelines, watching their family be distracted by the moral code of the world, while our Savior is asking, "Do you want to get well?"

If that is you, it's time to get in the pool and stop sitting on the sideline. I see the longing in the eyes of our families for hope to be revealed, and we must be the reflection in their pupil with our hand extended, saying, "Do you want to get well?"

I feel the tug of the Holy Spirit saying, "Quit making excuses, and climb to your feet and lead a revolution!" Do you want to get well? "When Jesus saw him stretched out by the pool and knew how long he had been there, he said, 'Do you want to get well?'" (John 5:6, MSG).

Here was this man, stuck only steps from the water, steps from his miracle, steps from his refreshing, but it may as well have been miles. This man's mindset of blaming others stood in the way of his miracle. It was everyone else's fault that he couldn't get in the water and be healed.

There have been times where God has had to wait until our excuses have run out so He can give us what we dismissed as only a mirage of yesterday's hope. But today is the day that superstition gets interrupted by the supernatural.

The Bible says Jesus went to Jerusalem. He ends up at the pool of Bethesda, a place that had five porches, where the sick were divided into groups. Bethesda means "house of mercy" or "house of grace." This was the place where the wounded, lame, crippled and diseased would camp out day after day. Here is the superstition: The sick believed that periodically an angel would come down and stir the water. If the angel stirred the

water, then the first one to get in the water would be healed of all diseases! I'm so amazed that this place was called the house of mercy and grace, but it was all dependent on works. They had to make it happen. Look at what Ephesians says about grace: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8, MEV).

Here is a rule: Grace means "to empower." If you're not at a place that is empowering you, you are not able to live a life of grace.

Can you imagine? Each day, these people stared at the water. Each day, they watched for the whirlpool. Days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months and months to years. Stuck in a cycle of pain/disappointment, and every day, waiting on tomorrow to be different. It is a form of insanity to do the same thing every day/expecting a different result. These people knew each other by name. They knew each other's pain. They knew each other's story. They were a fraternity of people waiting for a miracle. It was every man for himself!

When the water started bubbling up, people started diving in! I believe this is a key to giving up excuses and seeing your miracle. When it becomes more about helping others and not ourselves, we will see miracles! That is why I love the four guys in Mark 2:1-5. Remember? These guys busted a hole in the roof to lower the paralytic down to Jesus. It wasn't about them! Sometimes you have to get crazy enough to remove the roof!

The Bethesda Pool was every man for himself! I imagine there was hair pulling, people kicking other people's walkers, just mass hysteria. They were either lethargic or alive; it just depended who stirred the water. But before you judge them, think about us today, waiting on the right sermon, song, tweet or Instagram post. Key: They had missed who walked in!

I wonder how often God walks into our homes, but we don't notice because we have never included him in the plan or schedule for our day. These people were waiting on mercy and grace, but no one noticed that mercy and grace had just walked in. They were so desperate to be healed that they ignored the Healer. They were mere steps away from an encounter, but they were so consumed with their issues that they probably thought Jesus was just the pool boy!

There was about to be an altar call at the city pool. This man was about to experience a powerful altar call. He had waited so long. But his tomorrow was about to become his today, because there is one place that will change everything, one place that will restore your joy. One place that will strengthen that which remains, stir you to change your world, renew your mind and transform your heart. That place is called the altar.

The altar is the place where what you have been gets interrupted by what you can become! So, Jesus walks up to a guy who was lame, who had been sitting at the same church for 38 years. Watch now, here come the excuses! Jesus is asking, "Do you want to be healed and set free or not?" "The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred. But while I am coming, another steps down before me'" (John 5:7).

For 38 years, this man had been so close to healing and freedom, but had no one to help him get in. Key: You will never get free as long you're blaming the ones who have gotten in your way. Dare we sit silently licking our wounds of yesterday's failures while the enemy plots out tomorrow's tragedies? God is asking, "How long will you make excuses? Will you choose Me? What do you even believe?"

Jesus was asking this man, "Have you had enough?" Enough of the slavery! You're standing in the house of mercy and grace without even experiencing it. There comes a moment when your

faith invites God into your issue, and He must respond to your obedience. What has held you back and kept you from walking out your destiny must be put aside! Jesus is at the door knocking (Rev. 3:19-20).

It's time to leave your pool of sorrow for the river of life. Here comes the powerful moment: It's time to walk it off. "Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." Immediately the man was healed, took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:8-9).

It's time to activate your faith. It's time to stand up and declare, "My God has healed me!" Some of you have dreams that have died. You have been stuck as a slave to your circumstances, blaming everybody else, blaming everyone for your hurt/past/offense. If you are holding everyone around you hostage to the pain of your past, you have now become the terrorist. Get free so you can free others. I have learned that if the dream had been easily obtained, we never would have learned the power of activating our faith.

I have come to tell you that this is your moment. The water has been stirred. Get in the river of God. There are no excuses!

I made excuses for years, but when I picked up the freedom that was won for me on the cross and carried it out to the world as a testimony of God's power, I found my purpose and my calling. It was then that I was able to shine light into the darkness and show others where hope could be found. You may have issues that have placed you by your "pool of Bethesda" waiting for your healing. Perhaps it's a dream that has died and needs resurrecting. Maybe you have been a slave to your circumstances for too long. Whatever it is, blaming and making excuses won't bring you freedom. It's time to stop waiting on someone else to stir the waters of freedom in your life. Stop looking for another inspirational quote, tweet or meme. Realize you have direct access to the throne room of God. He

is waiting for you to look up and see that He wants to heal you.

No more excuses. Today is your tomorrow!

Listen as Karen shares more about “No More Excuses” in this episode of *The Breathing Room*:

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Karen makes her home in Fort Worth, Texas, along with her husband, evangelist and author Pat Schatzline and their daughter Abigail. Their son Nate and daughter-in-love Adrienne live in California, where they are youth pastors and have made Pat and Karen grandparents with their two sons, Jackson and Anderson.

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